IRRIGATION

Over-watering your lawn can cause fertilizers, pesticides and other hazardous chemicals to be washed into our waterways. Proper irrigation can save you time and money, as well as protect our water resources.

- Irrigate when the soil is nearly dry
- Water the lawn, not the sidewalk, street or driveway
- Water in the early morning to discourage lawn disease and reduce evaporation
- Irrigate slowly so that water doesn't run off or compact the soil
- Use a can to measure the amount of water you're putting on your lawn. ¾" to 1" is plenty of water for most lawns
- Plant drought tolerant native plants to reduce watering needs
- Use a rain barrel to collect rainwater, irrigate your landscape and save $$$

EROSION

Sediment impacts aquatic life, habitat and water quality and can lead to property flooding.

- Re-seed bare lawn area
- Mulch exposed soil in gardens and flower beds
- Plant groundcover, trees and shrubs to anchor soil in place, reduce erosion and filter pollutants in runoff
- Keep sediment off sidewalks, driveways and other hard surfaces
- Follow all construciton site laws and practices

PLEASE SHARE THESE TIPS WITH YOUR LANDSCAPING COMPANY AND NEIGHBORS!

CITY OF WILMINGTON
Storm Water Services
P.O. Box 1810
305 Chestnut Street
Wilmington, NC 28402

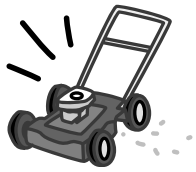
You are the SOLUTION to storm water pollution!

MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LAWN CARE & WATER QUALITY

Runoff from rain events and improper irrigation methods can transport fertilizers, pesticides, sediment, yard debris and other pollutants directly into our waterways.

Did you know that **YOU** can help prevent water pollution from lawn care activities???

What you do in your yard or on your property directly impacts local waterways. Improper lawn care practices can result in fish kills, algal blooms, intense aquatic weed growth and disturbed aesthetic views. Follow the lawn care tips inside to improve and protect our waterways.

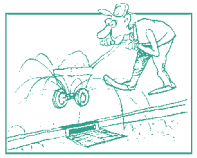


MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LAWN CARE & WATER QUALITY!

FERTILIZER

Fertilizing properly can save you time and money and prevent water pollution. Over-fertilizing your lawn may seem insignificant, but careless application on thousands of lawns can add up to major problems for waterways in the form of high nutrient levels and algal blooms.

- GET A SOIL TEST- It's free, will save you time and money and provides specific nutrient needs and application rates for your lawn. Soil testing kits and services are FREE at the New Hanover County Cooperative Extension, 6206 Oleander Drive, 452-6393
- Grasscycle - leave grass clippings on the lawn; they are a cheap, safe, and effective natural fertilizer and soil conditioner
- Avoid fertilizing before it rains
- Keep fertilizer off paved surfaces like sidewalks, streets and driveways



If fertilizer is applied too heavily or unevenly, it may burn the grass or result in a patchy lawn. To avoid this, use the following method:

- Estimate your lawn area in square feet: pace off the length and width of your yard (1 large pace equals 2 ft). Multiply length x width to get total square feet
- Example: If your yard is 10 paces wide, that would equal 20 ft and 12 paces long, that would equal 24 ft. Then multiply 20ft X 24ft, for a total of 480 square feet of lawn area. Calculate and measure the correct amount of fertilizer for the total square feet per application rates on the bag of fertilizer.
- Be sure to calibrate your fertilizer spreader so that you are applying the correct amount of fertilizer. Drop spreaders do the best job in keeping fertilizer on the lawn and not on the sidewalk, street or driveway.

How to Save Money and Have a Green Lawn

Soil testing can save you time and money when it comes to fertilizing your lawn. For example, if you have 1,000 square feet of lawn area:

Option A: Fertilize twice a year, at an average of $25.00 a session for time and materials, at a cost of $50.00 a year.

Option B: Get a free soil testing kit and analysis from the NHC Cooperative Extension and "grasscycle" regularly, and you may only need minimal fertilizer or no fertilizer at all.

Recycling grass clippings back onto your lawn can provide up to 25% of your lawn's total fertilizer needs - naturally. Grass clippings contain about 4% nitrogen, 2% potassium and 1% phosphorus. Clippings also serve as a food source for bacteria in the soil, which are doing many beneficial things, such as decomposing thatch. Getting a soil test and recycling grass clippings will save you time and money and will help improve Wilmington's waterways!

PESTICIDES & HERBICIDES

The majority of insects found on a lawn are beneficial. Pesticides are poisonous and can actually harm birds and animals that keep unwanted insects in check.

- Landscape with disease and pest resistant native plants
- Weed by hand and use natural predators, such as ladybugs, to control pests
- Use pesticides as a last resort, use sparingly and spot treat only
- Avoid applying pesticides before it rains

MOWING

Proper mowing prevents water loss, reduces weeds and keeps your lawn healthy.

- Mow only when the grass is dry
- Alternate mowing patterns
- Don't cut grass too short- lack of shade will dry out the soil and cause weed and insect problems
- Mower blades should be kept sharp because dull blades leave grass wounded and vulnerable to pests and diseases

YARD WASTE

Yard waste, such as leaves and grass clippings, that are blown into streets, storm drains or ditches, can cause algae blooms, oxygen depletion and fish kills in waterways. Clogged drains and ditches can cause property flooding.

- Leaves and yard clippings can be composted and used as a mulch
- Grasscycle - leave grass clippings on the lawn as a natural fertilizer
- Bag or containerize waste for yard waste collection day
- **Do not** blow, sweep or hose leaves and other debris into a street, storm drain, ditch or waterway *(City ordinance)*

XERISCAPING - Using Native Plants

Xeriscaping is a method of landscaping using native plants and site designs to conserve water and protect the environment. Native plants require less water and fertilizer and are more drought, disease and pest resistant. Xeriscaping can save you time and money on fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation.